



Betsy Gara
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Connecticut Council of Small Towns
Before the Labor and Public Employees Committee
February 18, 2021

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in **opposition** to the following bills that seek to expand workers' compensation benefits, which will increase costs for municipalities:

- **SB-665 - AN ACT CONCERNING WORKERS' COMPENSATION BENEFITS FOR CERTAIN MENTAL OR EMOTIONAL IMPAIRMENTS SUFFERED BY EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES PERSONNEL, DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION EMPLOYEES AND DISPATCHERS**
- **SB-660 - AN ACT EXPANDING WORKERS' COMPENSATION BENEFITS FOR MENTAL OR EMOTIONAL IMPAIRMENTS SUFFERED BY ALL WORKERS**
- **SB-666 - AN ACT CONCERNING WORKERS' COMPENSATION BENEFITS FOR CERTAIN MENTAL OR EMOTIONAL IMPAIRMENTS AND MENTAL HEALTH CARE FOR CORRECTIONAL STAFF, EMERGENCY MEDICAL STAFF AND DISPATCHERS.**
- **SB – 666 - AN ACT CONCERNING WORKERS' COMPENSATION BENEFITS FOR CERTAIN MENTAL OR EMOTIONAL IMPAIRMENTS AND MENTAL HEALTH CARE FOR CORRECTIONAL STAFF, EMERGENCY MEDICAL STAFF AND DISPATCHERS.**

Connecticut's small towns and cities have tremendous respect and appreciation for emergency medical services personnel and other first responders. However, we are very concerned that expansion of the benefits provided under Public Act 19-17, which was adopted after considerable discussion among the parties as a compromise measure, will place a heavy burden on our towns and local property taxpayers.

Given the state's ongoing fiscal challenges and recent cuts and serious delays in providing state aid to municipalities, COST must take a hard line in opposing any new or expanded unfunded mandates. Any additional cost burdens placed on municipalities at this time will directly result in property tax increases and/or cuts in critical programs and staff.

According to the Office of Fiscal Analysis (OFA) in analyzing similar proposals in previous years, the cost to municipalities will be highly variable depending on the number and severity of the claims filed and will result in increases in premium costs and a wide range of potential per claim costs. Although towns are working hard to control local costs, declining revenues and increased costs associated with providing local services is taking its toll.

As the state looks to shift more of the costs of providing critical education, public safety and other services onto the backs of municipalities, we are concerned with the impact of any expansion of workers' compensation on both state and local costs.



COST urges lawmakers to oppose efforts to expand last year's compromise bill due to concerns with the impact of such expansion on local property taxpayers.

Thank you for your consideration.

Founded in 1975, COST is the only organization dedicated exclusively to advocating at the state Capitol on behalf of Connecticut's small towns.